Shrinathji, Ghummar And Khumbna.

Krishna loves sitting by himself in his heavenly home Goloka. One day, he just feels like having some fun. In the language of gods, ‘fun’ means ‘leela’. He thinks of all his cowherd friends in Gokul and Vrindavan. Nanda, his father always called them gopas and gopis. He remembers how he broke all the gopis’ pots to eat their butter. He also misses the ‘Raas Leela’ that he played with the gopis in the night secretly.

Krishna decides to meet all his friends on Prithvi. He takes the form of Shrinathji and visits his oldest and best friend Goverdhan Parvat first. Shrinathji plays hide and seek with him for a long time. He feels tired after some time though. So he asks Goverdhan if he can give him something to eat. Goverdhan scratches the peak of his head and wonders for a while. He sends a secret signal to Ghummar, a cow which belongs to Nanda’s house. He knows Shrinathji loves the milk of Nanda’s cows.

Ghummar is busy chewing cud in her master’s house. Her master, Sadu Pande is a good man and takes good care of all his cows. When Ghummar gets the secret signal from Goverdhan Parvat, she quietly slips out of Sadu Pande’s house and goes to meet him.

Goverdhan introduces Ghummar to Shrinathji. Ghummar looks at Goverdhan and says, “Shrinathji is my old friend. I know him very well. He has just taken another form to meet us all.” Goverdhan says, “Oh? You know that? I thought cows were not aware of such things.” Ghummar looks at Goverdhan squarely and says, “Well. You know that now! We are as aware of Krishna as you are, Goverdhan. Krishna is within all of us.” Shrinathji looks at both his friends impatiently and says, “Can you both argue later. I am feeling hungry!” Ghummar smiles at Shrinathji gives him all the milk that she has in her udder and goes back to Sadu Pande’s cowshed.

When Sadu Pande starts milking Ghummar in the evening, she has no milk to give him. He pats Ghummar softly and says, “Is something wrong with you Ghummar? Are you feeling unwell? Shall I take you to the Vaidya?”

Ghummar nods her head from side to side and says, “Mooooooooooo..” She has a twinkle in her eyes. Sadu Pande asks her to eat some freshly cut grass and rest for a few days. Ghummar nods her head up and down this time. She would love to rest. Yes. That sounded nice. There was no need to graze on the pastures for the whole day to find a fresh patch of grass. Sadu Pande would do all her work for her. She smiles to herself, curls up on the floor and decides to take a nap.

Every time Shrinathji feels hungry; Goverdhan sends Ghummar a secret signal. Ghummar tells the other cows to take her place in the cowshed for a while. She would then quickly run up Goverdhan Parvat and give Shrinathji all her milk.

A week passes in this manner. Sadu Pande comes to know about Ghummar’s secret trips. He wonders if Ghummar is giving her milk to other cowherds instead of to him. So he follows her. Ghummar was his cow after all. How dare she give her milk to other cowherds? But Sadu Pande is surprised to see Ghummar climbing Goverdhan Parvat. He sees Shrinathji holding up his hand to collect Ghummar’s milk. He too recognizes Shrinathji as another form of Krishna, bows down to him and offers him the milk of all his cows.

When the gopas and gopis come to know that their old friend Krishna has come to meet them all, they rush to meet him with pails full of milk, sweets, and all his favourite food. They offer it all to Shrinathji. Shrinathji is very happy to meet all his gopa and gopi friends again. He loves the food that his friends bring for him every day. They have fun for many days.

After a few weeks, Sadu Pande tells Shrinathji that Ghummar was going to give birth to a calf in the near future. Shrinathji is happy to hear the news. He says, “I cannot drink Ghummar’s milk now. A cowherd named Dharmadas lives in the next village. He has a cow that belonged to my father Nanda. He also has a nephew called Khumbandas. I would like to drink the milk of Dharmadas’ cow only. Please ask Khumbandas to bring

that cow’s milk for me. I want to play with Khumbandas in the evenings too.” Sadu Pande agrees to do all this.

When Sadu Pande conveys the message to Dharmadas and Khumbandas, they are overjoyed. Shrinathji drinks all the milk from Dharmadas’ cow. He wipes his milky moustache, looks at Khumandas and says, “Can I call you Khumbna? Will you teach me how to play new games and tell me about the pranks that you played on your friends?” Khumbna nods his head, winks at Shrinathji and asks him to wait till his uncle Dharmadas leaves.

The minute Dharmadas leaves Kumbhna looks at Shrinathji and says, “Why Shrinathji! You look just like my grandfather but you are actually as young as me. How is that possible?” Shrinathji looks at Khumbna and says, “Shhhh. Khumbhna. Don’t reveal my secret to my friends. They don’t know that I have changed my form. They still think I am their old friend Krishna.”

Kumbhna looks at Shrinathji directly and says, “That’s cheating. You can’t pretend to be someone else. Why can’t you just be your old self as Krishna?”

Shrinathji sighs and says, “I have to change my form according to the needs of human beings Khumbna. These gopas are simpletons. They don’t care about my different forms. They can recognize me in any form.”

Khumbna is amazed to hear this. He looks at Shrinathji and says, "You do have fun, don't you? Do you get to play different roles too? Or do you always get the hero's role?"

Shrinathji says, “Well, people who know me think of me as a hero. People who don’t know me think I am playing tricks with them.”

Khumbna says, “Hmmm. That’s tough.”

Shrinathji says, “That’s what my leela is all about Khumbna. It is not always fun. Sometimes, I have to do nasty things to make my friends come closer to me. I don’t like doing it. But I have to do it.”

Khumbna, “You mean it is your duty to be nasty too?”

Shrinathji looks at him glumly and says, “Yes. Sometimes I have to do mean things too. To make them understand me. But they thank me later on for being so strict too.”

Khumbna yawns and says, “Oh? I don’t understand all of that. I’m hungry. Can we eat something now? The gopas brought some delicious snacks for you today too.” They eat to their heart’s content, hold hands and decide to meet their old friend Ghummar and her newborn baby. They take all their gopa friends along with them. Ghummar is happy to meet them all. They play with her calf for a long time.

That night Shrinathji says, “Khumbna, I am so glad to have so many friends and especially a friend like you. I came down from Goloka for this very reason. I’m glad I did so.” Khumbna smiles at Shrinathji and says, “Let’s have as much fun as we can now. I know you will leave us soon. ” Shrinathji sighs sadly and says, “You know that already don’t you? Yes, I have to leave you all but I will always remain with you too.” Khumbna turns around in his bed and says, “I know that Shrinathji. You always take good care of all of us. Now just sleep. Jai Shree Krishna.” Shrinathji has fun with all his friends every day for many days. And Goverdhan Parvat is the happiest of all because so many people come to visit him every day now.